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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: FORMER PM GRIGOL MGALOBISHVILI NAMED NATO
PERMREP

REF: A. A. 2008 TBILISI 002009
[1](#)B. B. 2008 TBILISI 002171
[1](#)C. C. TBILISI 000090
[1](#)D. D. TBILISI 000170
[1](#)E. E. TBILISI 000090

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Grigol Mgalobishvili, former Prime Minister and career diplomat, was approved by the Georgian Parliament as Georgia's Permanent Representative to NATO on June 26, succeeding Revaz Beshidze. Mgalobishvili's tenure as Prime Minister, though short, was relatively well received(ref A) and he was a productive interlocutor with the United State(ref B). He was replaced as Prime Minister on January 30, 2009 due to serious health issues(ref C, ref D). He has now recovered from his illness and will undoubtedly continue to be a good contact for the U.S. in his new role. End Summary.

PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

[1](#)2. (U) Mgalobishvili, born 7 October 1973, is from Tbilisi and has spent the majority of his diplomatic career working on Georgian relations with Turkey. He graduated from Tbilisi State University in 1995 with a BA and MA in Oriental Studies. He spent 1992-1993 studying Turkish at Istanbul University. He speaks English, Turkish, Russian and German and is married with two children.

DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL CAREER

[1](#)3. (U) Mgalobishvili served as the Georgian diplomatic representative to Turkey from 1995 to 2002 in various positions, including as an interpreter, Attache, First Secretary and Political Counselor. From 2002-2003 he studied at Oxford in a postgraduate course in diplomatic studies, and in 2003 Mgalobishvili assumed the position of Deputy Director of the Department of U.S., Canadian and Latin American Countries at the Georgian MFA. In 2004 he was promoted to lead the Department of European and Euro Integration, followed by promotion to Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and then on October 20, 2006 was promoted to Ambassador. He served as Georgia's Ambassador to Turkey until October 27, 2008 when he was nominated as Prime Minister. He served in this position until submitting his resignation on January 30, 2009, due to his ongoing kidney illness (nephritis).

[1](#)4. (C) In a November 2008 introductory meeting with Ambassador Tefft(ref B) Mgalobishvili stressed that a key issue for the country is how Georgia's allies "address the larger issue with Russia, whether they will let principles govern the relationship or simply move forward with Russia as a matter of convenience." Mgalobishvili is known for not being a particularly political figure(ref A) and according to sources in the GOG is generally liked and considered a skilled diplomat(ref A). Despite rumours in December 2008 that he had fallen out of favor with Saakashvili, including one extensively covered in the press involving an incident

where Saakashvili allegedly threw a cell phone at him, these rumors were dismissed by close confidants of both men as false(ref C). Such rumors were fueled by Mgaloblishvili's need to frequently travel to Europe while PM for medical treatment, and his short tenure for the same reason.

15. (U) Mgaloblishvili told the Ambassador July eighth that he will move to Brussels at the end of September to take up his duties.

TEFFT